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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



ORGANIZING AN ANTI-RAT CAMPAIGN

(For use of organization leaders)

OBJECT

The object of anti-rat campaigns is to destroy rats and awaken public interest in rat control by pointing out the economic status of the pests and their relation to community health, by teaching the importance of clean premises, sanitation, and rat-proofing, by instructing in the best methods of rat control, and by demonstrating the value of organized effort.

BASIS

The basis of the campaign should be the free distribution of barium-carbonate rat-poison to participants and giving prizes in contests for rat tails. (This method is recommended for best results but the poison may be omitted where desired.)

ACTION

The action taken, in brief, should consist of -

1. Forming an efficient organization.
2. Stimulating public interest in rat control through intensive publicity prior to the campaign and through prizes offered for rat tails.
3. Advocating effective methods of rat destruction, arranging to have needed supplies on hand, and furnishing explicit directions for their use.

METHODS

Many methods of destruction will be employed, but the use of barium carbonate bait, as described in Farmers' Bulletin 1302, will constitute the chief mode of attack on the rats. Trapping with the ordinary snap rat trap, which is also explained in this bulletin, will be recommended to any who object to the use of poisons. The elimination of food and shelter and the rat-proofing of buildings will be stressed as follow-up methods to insure permanent rat riddance.

ORGANIZATION

The first step in organizing the campaign should be to call a mass meeting of interested and influential citizens, at which a definite plan of action should be proposed and, if adopted, made operative by the election or appointment of officers and committeemen.

The selection of a leader or director is of prime importance. He must accept the responsibility for the direction of the campaign. The degree of success attained will depend largely upon his initiative and resourcefulness. The county agricultural or home demonstration agent will act in this capacity when available, otherwise a capable person should be appointed, or he may be employed and be well paid for his services.

The detailed work of the campaign should be placed largely in the hands of carefully selected committees. Getting capable men interested in serving as committee chairmen is of utmost importance.

### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committees should be appointed for the following duties:

1. Finance and Supply Committee.

To raise necessary funds through popular subscription or otherwise.

To order barium carbonate and other supplies, to employ and direct labor for the packing of poison, and to perform other related work.

2. Publicity Committee.

To arrange for newspaper publicity, stereopticon slides, posters, banners, lectures, etc. To have directions, circulars, and other matter printed or mimeographed.

3. Distribution Committee.

To attend to the distribution of hand bills, circulars, and posters and also to arrange for the distribution of barium carbonate.

4. Prize Committee.

To obtain by donation a number of prizes.

To arrange for receiving and accounting for rat tails.

To award prizes.

A committee may also be appointed to investigate means of improving sanitary conditions, including garbage collection and disposal in cities.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

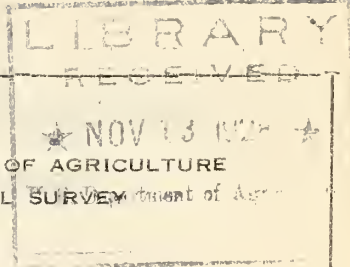
An Executive Committee, consisting of the committees as a whole or of the committee chairmen, is advisable and it should first decide on a budget of expense. This will depend upon the amount of poison to be purchased for free distribution and its cost; the charges for freight, labor, and supplies for putting up the barium carbonate in small packages; the expense for printing directions, posters, and other publicity; and the amount to be offered as prizes.

These basic matters having been decided by the Executive Committee, the special committees may then proceed with their detailed work. The Finance and Supply Committee should function first and order the barium carbonate at least two weeks prior to the campaign. With preliminary plans adopted, poison ordered, and funds in hand, the other committees can go ahead with more confidence and effectiveness in the certain knowledge that the campaign is assured.

The success of the campaign hinges upon the interest and ability of the Director and of the Executive Committee. Start with capable leaders.

Suggestions for committees, sample copies of posters, and other publicity matter will be furnished by the United States Department of Agriculture on request.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

# ORGANIZING AN ANTI-RAT CAMPAIGN ( Towns and Cities )

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## ORGANIZING AN ANTI-RAT CAMPAIGN

### (Towns and Cities)

#### OBJECT

The object of an anti-rat campaign is not merely to destroy rats, but to awaken public interest in rat control. This is accomplished by pointing out the economic status of the rat as a pest and its relation to the community health; by teaching the importance of clean premises, sanitation, and rat-proofing; by instructing in the best methods of rat control; and by demonstrating the value of organized efforts.

#### PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

The general plan of the campaign should be based on an attempt to arouse the whole community to make a concerted drive on rats during a specified time, usually one week. Offering prizes for the largest number of rat tails turned in by boys and girls from school districts has stimulated interest in campaigns in the smaller towns and country districts. As a rule, however, particularly in the larger towns and cities, the campaign against rats must be on more of a business basis.

One of the most popular methods has been based on the free distribution of rat poison. The poison is purchased in bulk, put up in small paper bags or envelopes with directions for use, and distributed through drug stores, fire stations, or from door to door during the campaign week. The poison may be purchased by the city, by some organization, or with funds raised for the campaign. Frequently some service organization, such as the chamber of commerce,



will donate the poison, in which case there is printed on one side of the package, "Compliments of the Chamber of Commerce." This makes effective advertising, and most organizations will be glad of the opportunity. Boy scouts frequently do their part by distributing the poison, under supervision. The interest of the community in using the poison is stimulated by intensive publicity prior to and during the campaign week.

The campaign is made much more effective by the employment of a number of men to inspect all premises in the business sections of the city, to make recommendations regarding the elimination of rat shelter and the rat-proofing of buildings, and to distribute poisoned baits and later check up on the results. These or other men should also destroy rats at city dumps and at other centers of rat infestation. They should be given detailed instructions by a rodent-control specialist regarding their work before operations begin.

All organizations in the city interested in the public welfare, including the city government, should be asked to contribute in some way toward making the campaign a success, and whenever practicable should be charged with the responsibility of carrying out a definite part of the campaign. One organization might be asked to prepare and circulate handbills regarding the campaign; another, possibly a women's club, might be requested to prepare posters--or to interest schools in doing so--and to display them; another might be assigned the task of preparing several window exhibits; several others might each be asked to employ a man for a week or more to carry out the poisoning and inspection work. The city government would probably be willing to make arrangements to keep rats permanently under control on all city property. The sanitary

conditions of the city should be carefully looked into, particularly in regard to the collection and disposal of garbage, and they should be corrected if necessary.

### ACTION TO BE TAKEN

1. Hold meeting of all individuals and representatives of all organizations interested and--
  - a. Decide upon a date for the campaign (preferably of at least one week's duration).
  - b. Consider and adopt a plan of action.
  - c. Appoint a leader and committees.
  - d. Obtain assistance of rodent-control specialist if available.
2. Prepare in advance for the campaign by--
  - a. Obtaining cooperation of service organizations, women's clubs, boy scouts, etc.
  - b. Raising funds and obtaining prizes (if prizes are to be offered).
  - c. Obtaining poison (if to be distributed) and arranging to put it in proper form for distribution, including sacking and labeling, with directions for use.
  - d. Directing intensive publicity to stimulate public interest, including preparation of newspaper articles, putting up banners, posters, and stickers, and circulating handbills, announcements, etc.
3. During the campaign week--
  - a. Distribute poison or poison baits, with directions for use.
  - b. Begin the count of rat tails received from contestants.
  - c. Hold demonstrations, give illustrated lec-



tures and talks to school children, and show rat films.

- d. Employ men to place poison baits in business sections and to inspect premises, and make recommendations for the elimination of rat harbors and for rat-proofing.
- e. Arrange for the destruction of rats at city dumps and at other rat-infested centers.

## METHODS

The use of powdered red squill or of barium carbonate, as described in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1533, of the United States Department of Agriculture, will constitute the chief mode of attack on the rats. Calcium-cyanide dust will be used in fumigating rat burrows at the city dump and at other places outside of buildings. Other methods of rat destruction may, of course, be resorted to. Such follow-up methods as the elimination of food and shelter and the rat-proofing of buildings will be stressed, particularly their importance in making permanent in the town or city the good results of the campaign.

## ORGANIZATION

The first step in organizing the campaign should be to call a mass meeting of interested and influential citizens. At this meeting a definite plan of action should be proposed and, if adopted, it should be made operative by the election or appointment of officers and committeemen.

The selection of a leader or director is of prime importance. He must accept the responsibility for the campaign. The degree of success

attained will depend largely upon his initiative and resourcefulness. The county agricultural or home demonstration agent may act in this capacity when available, otherwise a capable person should be appointed, or he may be employed and be well paid for his services.

The detailed work of the campaign should be placed largely in the hands of carefully selected committees. Getting capable men interested in serving as committee chairmen is of the utmost importance.

### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committees should be appointed for the following duties:

1. Finance and Supply Committee.
  - a. To raise necessary funds through popular subscription or otherwise.
  - b. To order red squill or barium carbonate and other poison and supplies; to employ and direct labor for the packing of poison; and to perform other related work.
2. Publicity Committee.
  - a. To arrange for newspaper publicity, motion-pictures, posters, banners, lectures, etc.
  - b. To have directions, circulars, and other matter printed or mimeographed.
3. Distribution Committee.
  - a. To attend to the distribution of hand-bills, circulars, and posters and also to arrange for the distribution of poison.

4. Prize Committee.

- a. To obtain by donation a number of prizes.
- b. To arrange for receiving and accounting for rat tails.
- c. To award prizes.

5. Operational Committee.

- a. To employ, instruct, and supervise a number of men who will inspect premises in the business districts, make recommendations relative to the elimination of rat food and shelter, and indicate means of shutting out rats, and who will distribute poison baits where needed and check the results.
- b. To arrange for thorough and periodical destruction of rats in city dumps and other centers of infestation.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The designation of an Executive Committee, consisting of all members of the committees or of the committee chairmen, is advisable, and it should first decide on a budget of expense. This will depend upon the quantity of poison to be purchased for free distribution and its cost, plus the charges for freight, labor, and supplies for putting it up in small packages; the number of temporary employees or inspectors needed for covering the entire business section; the expense for printing directions, posters, and other publicity; and the amounts to be offered as prizes.

These basic matters having been decided by the Executive Committee, the special committees may then proceed with their detailed work. The Finance and Supply Committee should function first and raise the funds and order the red squill or barium carbonate at least two weeks prior to the

campaign. With preliminary plans adopted, poisons ordered, and funds in hand, the other committees can go ahead with more confidence and effectiveness in the certain knowledge that the campaign is assured.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The success of the campaign hinges upon the interest and ability of the Director and of the Executive Committee. Motion pictures on rat control, lantern slides, posters, and press and other publicity material designed to stimulate public interest in rat control will be furnished in reasonable numbers by the United States Department of Agriculture upon request; also, whenever available, the services of a Biological Survey specialist in rodent control, who will assist in planning, organizing, and conducting the campaign.

## COUNTY-WIDE CAMPAIGNS

Except in large cities, it is usually desirable that anti-rat campaigns be conducted on a county-wide basis so that all towns and farms in the county may make a simultaneous drive on the rats. The larger towns should be organized as above and the country districts organized separately in cooperation with the farm bureau and other farmers' organizations, and with the assistance of the county government officials. If farm to farm assistance can not be arranged for, at least one demonstration in rat control in each township should be given by the rodent-control specialist and larger proportionate cooperation should be obtained from country schools.